

Firefighters' commitment and service to our community are invaluable. Volunteer firefighters often are called on to respond to emergencies of all types. From battling structure fires to conducting search and rescue operations, volunteer firefighters respond immediately whenever disaster strikes. These heroes often go above and beyond—they teach first aid, educate students about fire and other dangerous hazards, and even install car safety seats for children. Through their diverse and often-difficult work, volunteer firefighters provide lifesaving services and are a staple of our local community.

Firefighter Dierenzo has worked throughout his career to serve the people of Somerset County. On behalf of Pennsylvania's 13th Congressional District, I thank him for his work to protect life and property in our community and wish him continued health, safety, and success.

#### HONORING ROBERT STENSURD AS IOWAN OF THE WEEK

#### HON. CYNTHIA AXNE

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 18, 2021*

Mrs. AXNE. Madam Speaker, as Mental Health Month begins, I rise to ask the House of Representatives to join me in honoring Drake University Graduate Professor of the School of Education's Department of Leadership, Counseling and Adult Development, Robert Stensrud.

Professor Stensrud has been serving Iowa and its residents since he moved from Minnesota in 1970. He has dedicated his career to serving those with mental health needs and disabilities. He began his post-college career working with the Iowa Department of Education's Rehabilitation Education and Services Branch. It was here where he provided vocational rehabilitation at the State Mental Health Institute serving inpatients experiencing acute psychosis, substance abuse, and related disorders. In this position, he began to understand the importance of having a solid, dependable, and loving community. Most people who were released from his care did not have a community to return to, so they often struggled to survive in society.

Professor Stensrud has since dedicated his career to ensuring that all people feel important and seen. Some of his recent research highlights the childhood to prison pipeline and school to prison pipeline, where without a sense of community and belonging, many individuals find themselves in less than ideal circumstances to combat their feeling of being an outcast. Professor Stensrud understood that in order to make a difference, it is essential to work with students from a young age to help combat these issues. Professor Stensrud has done research through a LAUNCH Grant funded by Drake Head Start and the Iowa Department of Public Health on how mental health consultation can help improve coordination services for kids and their families, as well as how to train teachers and first responders to identify signs of trauma in children and act accordingly.

Professor Stensrud's next project will center around documenting the history and current operations of legacy farms in Iowa. Maintain-

ing long-standing legacy farms is no easy task, and the pressures often become too much for farmers. These stressors have been a large contributing factor to the increasing rate of suicide among farmers. Professor Stensrud wants to ensure that farmers in Iowa feel seen and appreciated while honoring their family's legacy and incredible accomplishments.

If Professor Stensrud's had one message to leave people with, it would be to show kindness and compassion to others. It is essential that we take care of those around us who struggle with their mental health or who are in a tough situation. His greatest joy and the motivation he has for being a professor is watching his graduates go on to positively impact others and make the world a better place. As Professor Stensrud would say, you may not be able to change the world, but you can change a life that goes on to save another life, and another after that. Making people feel loved and wanted is the first step, and one I believe we should all strive to achieve. We should not allow people to suffer in silence, rather be an ear for them. It is my honor to recognize Professor Robert Stensrud as our Iowan of the Week.

#### IN RECOGNITION OF JOHN CARLSON'S CAREER IN PUBLIC SERVICE

#### HON. MIKE GALLAGHER

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 18, 2021*

Mr. GALLAGHER. Madam Speaker, today I rise in honor of the career and service of Hobart, Wisconsin resident, Mr. John Carlson.

Mr. Carlson's notable Transportation Security Administration (TSA) career began in 2002, serving as the Assistant Federal Security Director (AFSD) for the Outagamie County Regional Airport, where he played a major role in the start-up of several TSA activities and assumed responsibility for day-to-day aviation security. In 2006, he was reassigned as the AFSD-Generalist at the Austin Straubel International Airport (GRB) Hub and Spoke Federal Security Director (FSD) staff where he handled compliance oversight, customer service, property accountability, safety, and model workplace strategies.

Given his extensive knowledge and leadership skills, Mr. Carlson would go on to assume roles where he was trusted to oversee a majority of TSA operations in four separate airports in northern Wisconsin: Austin Straubel International Airport, (GRB), Central Wisconsin Airport (CWA), Rhinelander-Oneida County Airport (RHI) and Appleton International Airport (ATW formerly Outagamie County Regional Airport).

Before beginning his career of service with TSA, Mr. Carlson served the United States honorably for twenty years in the U.S. Army as an infantry and military intelligence officer until his retirement in 1995 as a Lieutenant Colonel. Mr. Carlson's dedication and leadership in the state of Wisconsin are incredibly valuable, and the service he provides to Northern Wisconsin and his country is remarkable.

As we look back on Mr. Carlson's career, there is no doubt that he dedicated his life and

career to making the world around him a safer, better place. Mr. Carlson's continued service to both his country and his community is worthy of our highest admiration.

#### HONORING FIREFIGHTER CRAIG NOLTE

#### HON. JOHN JOYCE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 18, 2021*

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Firefighter Craig Nolte for his 36 years of service with the Meyersdale Volunteer Fire Department in Somerset County, Pennsylvania.

Firefighters' commitment and service to our community are invaluable. Volunteer firefighters often are called on to respond to emergencies of all types. From battling structure fires to conducting search and rescue operations, volunteer firefighters respond immediately whenever disaster strikes. These heroes often go above and beyond—they teach first aid, educate students about fire and other dangerous hazards, and even install car safety seats for children. Through their diverse and often-difficult work, volunteer firefighters provide lifesaving services and are a staple of our local community.

Firefighter Nolte has worked throughout his career to serve the people of Somerset County. On behalf of Pennsylvania's 13th Congressional District, I thank him for his work to protect life and property in our community and wish him continued health, safety, and success.

#### VA TRANSPARENCY & TRUST ACT OF 2021

SPEECH OF

#### HON. MARK TAKANO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, May 17, 2021*

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to support Representative BOST's bipartisan legislation, the "VA Transparency and Trust Act," or H.R. 2911, and for which Representative PAPPAS, Representative MANN, and I are original co-sponsors. This bill provides additional oversight for the funds Congress made available to VA through the Families First Coronavirus Response Act and the CARES Act in 2020, as well as the American Rescue Plan which we passed earlier this year.

The purpose of H.R. 2911 is to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit to Congress a detailed plan for obligating and expending coronavirus pandemic funding made available to the Department of Veterans Affairs by the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security, or CARES Act, or the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. H.R. 2911 also requires the VA Office of Inspector General to report to Congress semi-annually on VA's actual expenditures and obligations, comparing it to their detailed plan, and on other subjects. Finally, H.R. 2911 requires the Comptroller General of the United States to report to Congress twice—in 2022 and 2024—

on VA's process for developing its funding request, among other subjects.

Since the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic in early 2020, Congress has provided over \$36 billion dollars in supplemental funding—that is, funds that are in addition to VA's annual budget—to fund various pandemic-related operations and programs at VA.

Specifically, Congress provided to VA:

\$60 million in the Families First Coronavirus Response Act in March 2020 to support medical services and medical community care;

\$19.5695 billion in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act in March 2020 to support medical services, community care, medical facilities, informational technology systems, general administration, and other purposes; and \$16.694 billion in the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 in January 2021 to support medical care and health needs, supply chain modernization, the VA Office of Inspector General, a COVID-19 veteran rapid retraining assistance program, and other purposes.

With these significant investments in VA operations and programs, legislation is needed to ensure that VA efficiently and effectively obligates and spends these funds to achieve Department goals. The legislation provides ongoing oversight opportunities for relevant Congressional committees until all funds have been expended and provides for the VA Office of Inspector General and the Government Accountability Office to provide intermittent reviews of VA's spending and allocation process, similar to prior reporting.

H.R. 2911 adds to the existing oversight on VA's spending. It will enable greater transparency for Congress and the public to ensure that these funds are spent wisely to support critical VA programs and services as we recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### IN MEMORY OF JAMES FRALEY

#### HON. ANDY BARR

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 18, 2021*

Mr. BARR. Madam Speaker, I would like to honor a special Kentuckian, Mr. James Fraley, from Bath County, Kentucky.

Mr. Fraley was born May 7, 1928 in Midland, Kentucky to World War I veteran Burns Fraley and Austa Fraley. He graduated from Salt Lick High School in 1948. After graduation, he enlisted in the United States Air Force, where he served in Korea, Japan, and stateside for 4 years. He was honorably discharged in October of 1954.

Following his military service, Mr. Fraley worked as one of the early Texas Eastern Transmission Pipeline employees in Wyoming for 35 years. After retiring, he drove a bus for Bath County Schools for 20 years, worked at Keeneland, was a 30-year member of the University of Kentucky's 101 Club, and served on the Owingsville City Council. He was a 71-year member of the Free and Accepted Masons of Kentucky, where he served in several leadership roles. Mr. Fraley was also a member of the Scottish Rite, the York Rite, Oleika Shrine Temple, and the Royal Order of Scotland. In 2018, Mr. Fraley received the Bath County Community Service Award in recognition for all the help and support he provided to

an untold number of children in need of medical assistance through the Shriners Hospital. Mr. Fraley was a servant leader who believed in helping others, particularly children.

Mr. Fraley was married to his late wife Becky for 65 years and they had four children. Through his service to his country and to his local community, Mr. Fraley certainly left a positive mark on this world. Mr. Fraley, a great American, passed away on March 19, 2021. I am humbled to honor the memory of Mr. James Fraley before the United States Congress.

#### HONORING THE LIFE OF REVEREND E. BAXTER MORRIS

#### HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 18, 2021*

Ms. LEE of California. Madam Speaker, today I rise to pay tribute to Reverend E. Baxter Morris, the ninth and longest-serving pastor of the iconic First Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama.

Rev. Morris was a graduate of Selma University with a Bachelor of Theology Degree. He studied at Alabama State University, Samford University Extension Division, and the National Baptist Congress of Christian Education. When he was still in school at Selma University, Rev. Morris was selected as First Baptist Church's newest pastor in 1972.

The First Baptist Church was founded by 700 newly freed Black citizens after the Emancipation Proclamation was recognized in Montgomery in 1866. Church members completed the first church in 1867 on Columbus Street. The Columbus Street Church was destroyed by a fire, but was painstakingly rebuilt brick by brick using any bricks the parishioners could find. Completed in 1915, it became affectionately known as the "Brick A Day" Church.

The First Baptist Church played a pivotal role in the civil rights movement. Under the pastorate of Rev. Ralph D. Abernathy, it became a meeting place for historic civil rights leaders. In 1961, it served as refuge for Freedom Riders who were subjected to mob violence at the Montgomery Greyhound Bus Station and was the target of a Klu Klux Klan attack when Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and other civil rights icons were worshipping inside.

For almost 50 years, Rev. Morris led the Brick A Day congregation and made it his mission to acknowledge and preserve its rich history, while also continuing the church's legacy of progress and social change. In addition to shepherding his own congregation, Rev. Morris served in various roles at several other religious organizations, including the Montgomery-Antioch District Association of Baptist Churches and Missionary for the Alabama Baptist South East District State Convention. He also dedicated more than 20 years of service to the Montgomery Police Department as chaplain.

Rev. Morris was a pillar in his community and the true epitome of a servant leader. Buoyed by the strength and example of his predecessors, Rev. Morris lived his life to give, to support, and to uplift his fellow man.

Every year, I bring young people from the Martin Luther King Jr. Freedom Center in Oakland, CA on the Faith and Politics Congress-

sional Civil Rights Pilgrimage. Rev. Morris always greeted them with enthusiasm, kindness, and appreciation. Upon learning of his passing, they were heartbroken because he taught them so much and had earned their respect and admiration.

Along with my youth leaders, I send our heartfelt condolences and love to Rev. Morris' family, the First Baptist Church family, loved ones, friends, and community.

Please join me in honoring Rev. E. Baxter Morris and his many contributions to First Baptist Church, and the community of Montgomery, AL.

#### HONORING FIREFIGHTER CHRISTOPHER ALBRIGHT

#### HON. JOHN JOYCE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 18, 2021*

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Firefighter Christopher Albright for his 5 years of service with the Meyersdale Volunteer Fire Department in Somerset County, Pennsylvania.

Firefighters' commitment and service to our community are invaluable. Volunteer firefighters often are called on to respond to emergencies of all types. From battling structure fires to conducting search and rescue operations, volunteer firefighters respond immediately whenever disaster strikes. These heroes often go above and beyond—they teach first aid, educate students about fire and other dangerous hazards, and even install car safety seats for children. Through their diverse and often-difficult work, volunteer firefighters provide lifesaving services and are a staple of our local community.

Firefighter Albright has worked throughout his career to serve the people of Somerset County. On behalf of Pennsylvania's 13th Congressional District, I thank him for his work to protect life and property in our community and wish him continued health, safety, and success.

#### HONORING ROBERT J. FINE, JR., OF ADMIRAL FARRAGUT ACADEMY

#### HON. CHARLIE CRIST

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 18, 2021*

Mr. CRIST. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the outstanding contributions of Robert J. "Bob" Fine, Jr., Headmaster of Admiral Farragut Academy in St. Petersburg, Florida.

Mr. Fine is retiring from Admiral Farragut Academy after more than 30 years of service as an educator, administrator, coach, and leader in our local community. He first joined the school as a math teacher in 1989 and has served as Headmaster for more than two decades, beginning in 1998.

Mr. Fine is admired and beloved by hundreds of Farragut families and leaves an extraordinary legacy in the K-12 school's history. Under his exceptional leadership, the unique naval preparatory mission of Admiral Farragut Academy has endured since 1933, inspiring